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ABSTRACT

A teacher inservice training program was developed to increase student writing skills in a suburban elementary school. Subjects were 9 teachers and 200 third and fourth grade students. Strategies included implementing demand writing activities into the content area curriculum. For subject students, levels of success were measured by pre-training and post-training writing samples, and, for subject teachers, through direct observation of frequency of integration of curriculum and by an open-ended statement review which they completed. Results indicated that students were being taught with an integrated curriculum. Findings revealed that 65% of the students showed gains in their ability to write using a realistic situation and all teacher reactions to the integrated curriculum were positive. (Contains a table of data, 15 references, and related research. Surveys, pre-training and post-training writing prompts, observation checklist, writing rubric, permission letters, list of topics, and evaluation of results are appended.) (Author/CR)

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IMPROVING THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE STUDENT WRITING THROUGH THE USE OF INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

by
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A Final Report submitted to the Faculty of the Fischler Center for the Advancement of Education of Nova Southeastern University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

The abstract of this report may be placed in the University database system for reference.

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Abstract

Improving Third and Fourth Grade Student Writing Through the Use of Integrated Curriculum
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This report describes a teacher inservice training implemented by the author to increase writing skills of third and fourth grade students in a suburban elementary school. A target group of nine teachers and approximately 200 third and fourth grade students was established for the program. Strategies included mainly implementing demand writing activities into the content area curriculum. Levels of success were measured by pre-training and post-training writing samples from the targeted students, through direct observation of frequency of integration of curriculum by targeted teachers, and by an open-ended statement review completed by the targeted teachers. Results indicated that students were being taught with an integrated curriculum. Students showed gains in their ability to write using a realistic situation. Teacher reactions to the integrated curriculum were positive. Appendices include surveys used, pre-training and post-training writing prompts, an observation checklist, a writing rubric, permission letters, a list of topics, and an evaluation of results.

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

The elementary school involved in this final report was located in a suburban neighborhood in the southeastern part of the United States. The school which was founded in 1968, was built with an "open pod" situation. Each of the seven pods contained four classrooms and an activity center.

The school operated with the philosophy that a good elementary education permits a child to have a foundation to build on for future learning, therefore the school provided an environment that enabled each child to develop and achieve to his or her capacity - academically, socially, morally, and physically. The school had well-managed, organized, and pleasant learning environments. These environments allowed for opportunities in personal, social, and cultural interaction.

Through these interactions the school tried to instill in each child values and attitudes that enabled the child to function productively in society.

The school vision was for the staff and faculty to work cooperatively to enable each student to become a full-functioning, self directed, and motivated student. When the vision is complete the student will have the skills necessary to participate in a technological, multi-cultural, and ethnically diverse global society. The school's mission also was to provide the opportunities to ensure the development of each child's potential. The school planned to achieve the vision and mission in the 1995-1996 school year by teaching communication skills necessary for students to be successful citizens, creating a positive learning environment, and ensuring teacher participation in professional development.

The school served 595 students. Many of the students came from the surrounding neighborhood, with approximately 65 students being bussed in from an urban area. The school site

had only two buses that delivered students to school in the morning. One bus was from the urban area, and the other bus was from the neighborhood. There were three buses that picked children up in the afternoon. The additional bus took children to a gratis after-school program at a county park. There were approximately seven day care centers that transported about 50 children from school and one on-site day care (Latchkey) that served about 50 children. The estimated 300 other children rode bikes, walked home, or were picked up by a parent or guardian.

The majority of the students were from middle socio-economic homes with 30 percent receiving free or reduced price breakfast and lunch. Many parents worked within the suburban neighborhood at schools, medical offices, day care centers, and restaurants. Parents who commuted to the urban area tended to hold office jobs or middle managerial jobs. Due to the number of parents working within the local area, parent involvement was high, with the school achieving 100 percent

membership in the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) membership drive. The goals of the PTA were to support the school community through fundraisers, to increase parental involvement through education and communication, and to help provide a safe, nurturing environment for the children through volunteer hours.

There was a total of 595 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The average class size in kindergarten through third grade was 25. The average class size in grades four to six was 32. The site offered the traditional option or a multi-age classroom. Teachers in the multi-age classrooms were currently implementing the integration of grade levels. There was a multi-age classroom for each grade level. Parents were able to choose traditional or multi-age, however they were not continuously able to move their child. The student population included 309 males and 286 females with 79 percent white, 14 percent black, six percent Hispanic, and one percent other ethnic backgrounds.

The school offered a variety of programs to its students. Twenty-one students were in the program for Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), and nine students were in the program for Emotionally Handicapped (EH). A speech therapist provided services for 65 students. Thirty students were in the Academically Gifted Program (AGP). Three students received services from an aide for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Eighteen students were in the Personalized Education Program (PEP), which is a drop out prevention program.

Students in grades one to five received art for 40 minutes each week. Students in first through fifth grades received physical education (PE) twice a week for 30 minutes. They also received music twice a week for 30 minutes.
The counselor provided small group and individual counseling. The school media center operated with an "always open" philosophy. The media specialist also offered special programs for all classes if the teacher chose to participate.

The school participated in many activities that were basically county wide. Book-It!, a reading incentive program, sponsored by Pizza Hut began in October and ended in February. The program offered a free pizza to children who reached their reading goal each month. The site supported and used this program to document reading at the school. During the holiday season the site partook in Toys For Tots. This entailed collecting new toys for less fortunate children. Classes were rewarded for participation. The toy drive was sponsored by the Marines and Coldwell Banker. In late April the school also supports a drive for the Red Cross by collecting money from the children for one week. Each year the school is given an award, by the Red Cross, for its outstanding contribution.

To support the school philosophy, vision, and mission, the site implemented a number of programs. The Green Circle program was a series of human relations activities designed to help children develop a positive sense of self-worth and

prepare them for a society composed of people of different cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds. Volunteers came to the site to teach this program. The site also educated the students in Conflict/Resolution, which enabled the children to have the tools to work through a problem, without fighting. Along with outside motivational programs the site also had two school based awards that were celebrated each month. One award was for the child that had improved the most in each class. The other was for a child who was well-rounded and strived to go above and beyond.

The author, in her fourth year at this school, taught all fourth grade subjects to a heterogeneous base class. The author's class was formed with a core of 22 children from her previous year's class. Children had been added to the author's base class. The author requested that these children be from the resource SLD program. Extra-curricular responsibilities included Chairperson for the Textbook Committee, Chairperson for the Calendar Committee, and grade level representative for

the School Climate Task Force. Past responsibilities had included Guidance Committee membership, ordering and organizing of student incentives, finalization of scheduling, and faculty PTA board representative. The author was trained in the scoring of the state writing exam which is a timed performance assessment scored using a holistic scale. The author had become a contact person at the school site. As contact person, the writer observed and supported three teachers who were unfamiliar with the writing curriculum. In helping these new teachers to develop writing curriculum, the author had observed that writing was only taught in a set time block.

Writing is a powerful tool for learning in all content areas. Part of learning is to be able to put down in words the experiences a person has actually had. Once a student has formed a writing habit, school becomes easier, because the student can relate in detail any experiences he or she has encountered. By writing experiences down they become a

permanent record that the learner can reflect upon. This reflection may be used as an instrument to remind the student of concrete experiences about which he or she may not later remember the details. Writing also improves vocabulary and thought processes, because it requires precision that is unnecessary for an oral discussion.

The school site knows that writing is an integral part of learning. Teachers at this school site were recently updated on the district's curriculum for writing. Approximately 80 percent of the school's teachers had been formally trained in the county wide writing curriculum. Any new teachers entering the school are given the opportunity to also receive this training. The district required that process writing be taught for approximately 45 minutes a day. Most teachers adhered to this standard and did this in a set time block. Process writing involves brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. These activities are performed in sequential order, which take an average of one week to complete. This process is

logical and necessary in order for the students to partake in formal writing assignments later in their education; however, the state mandated a writing assessment that encompassed a different view of writing.

The state initiated a standardized writing exam for fourth, eighth, and tenth grades. This test encompassed critical thinking and writing skills, with no opportunity for revision. When the test was administered, the children were given sealed folders with the topic listed at the beginning of the first page. The teacher was not allowed to read the topic to the children, and there was no communication between the teacher and the students. The students had 45 minutes to write on the given topic; spelling, grammar and punctuation did not count. The state readers based the score on content and presentation. The student could score from a one to a six, with one being the lowest. The readers also rated the writing as being unrelated to the topic or no response at all, in the case that the student did not attempt the assignment. The district

wide curriculum was based on process writing, which allowed for and encouraged many revisions and teacher support. A lack of practice time in demand writing made it difficult for children to perform at their optimum level when required to write without revision.

The students at the selected site generally performed well. The students were above average. The scores for narrative and expository writing were slightly above the district level, however the expository scores continued to lag behind the narrative scores for the targeted school. On the six point scale, students at the selected site earned scores ranging from one to four in narrative and one to four and a half in expository. There were no non-response papers and there were no high scores of five or six. There was one expository paper that was scored as being unrelated to the topic (Appendix A, p. 57). Based on data of the school setting and environment, it was reasonable to expect the targeted students to score above the district level.

Students at the school site who participated in the state exam last year were surveyed (Appendix B, p. 59). Fifty-six fifth grade students returned permission slips and were able to participate. Of those 56 students only 50 remembered taking the state exam. The results of the survey were based on the 50 that remembered taking the test. Forty-one students felt that they were prepared to take the test. Nine students felt they were not prepared. Although 41 students felt prepared, only 40 students felt they did the best that they could, while 10 felt that they could have done better. Students were asked if there was anything the teachers could do to better prepare the students. This question required an explanation if the student answered yes. The writer observed that many children initially answered yes, and then changed their answer to no when they realized a yes answer required an explanation. Seventeen students answered yes and gave an explanation, while 33 students answered no, which required no explanation. Some of the suggestions that the students gave

were to provide additional practice, to give more writing experiences, and provide a pre-test setting (similar to what the author was proposing with the third and fourth grade students).

Nine classroom teachers at the selected site volunteered to participate in the program. Of these nine teachers, one was the researcher. All teachers were surveyed to see how many were integrating writing into at least one content area (Appendix C, p. 61). Seven of the nine teachers indicated that they taught writing through the developmental writing program or process writing. Three teachers indicated that they also used journals. Two other teachers stressed oral language. The survey showed that three of the nine teachers integrated writing into at least one subject area on a daily basis. Two teachers integrated writing into at least one subject on a weekly basis. Three teachers taught writing in a separate time block. One teacher indicated both that writing was taught in a separate time block and that writing was integrated into at

least one subject area on a daily basis. The majority of the teachers rated themselves as having minimum experience in the teaching of most areas of writing. Only three teachers rated themselves as being an expert in teaching process writing. One teacher indicated being a novice in five of the categories. The specific training of the teachers ranged from undergraduate courses in college to current workshops, inservices, and graduate writing courses. All but one of the teachers took a college course on teaching writing. Of the teachers who took a writing course, all of the teachers recalled that it was integrated into a language arts class and not a specific writing course. Seven of the surveyed teachers felt that the state writing exam was not fair at all. Teachers stated that the exam did not reflect students' writing ability and that it put too much pressure on the students. One teacher stated that the test destroyed the students' self esteem about writing that she had built up all year. Another teacher stated that the test was not fair, since the children were not used to

this style. Of the two teachers that did not respond like the other teachers, one of the teachers did not know enough to make a call on the test, and the other felt it was somewhat fair. The last question discussed inservice topics. Seven of the teachers would have like to be inserviced in integrated writing curriculum, four in expository writing, two in narrative writing, six in demand writing, two in process writing, and two in response logs. The author focused on integrated writing and demand writing in the given inservices and touched lightly on the other areas.

The situation should have been that all teachers were integrating demand writing with other content areas at least once a week, to allow for demand writing practice, similar to the writing situation on the state writing exam. There was a discrepancy in the way writing was taught in sectioned off blocks, and how it should have been integrated into other content areas. There was a need to increase the integration of demand writing through the curriculum to the point that all

teachers were integrating writing into at least one content area, at least once a week.

Seventy-five third graders and 91 fourth graders from the site were given a pre-test that was similar to the state writing exam (Appendix D, p. 64). The results showed that five percent of the students were scoring above the district average. The population of the school included above average students, therefore it was reasonable to expect that 75 percent of the students should have scored above the district average. There was a discrepancy of 70 percent of students scoring below the district average. There was a need to develop a writing program designed to increase student demand writing test scores.

Given the problem of teaching process writing but testing demand writing the author felt that the students were not being properly equipped to perform as well on the state standardized writing test as they could. With a full curriculum to teach it was difficult to teach demand writing in a separate

time block. Teachers had to collaborate subjects together in order to accommodate all teaching. The author felt that the following objectives would reduce writing deficiency.

The proposed objectives were:

After participation in a 12-week teacher training program 100 percent of the nine targeted teachers will express the benefits of an integrated writing curriculum as measured by review of responses to an open ended invitation to write about the positive effects of an integrated curriculum (Appendix E, p. 67).

After participation in a 12-week program, 100 percent of the nine targeted teachers will implement writing integration in the classroom a minimum of five times, as measured by a series of six weekly, prearranged, direct observations (Appendix F, p. 69).

After participation in a 12-week program, 100 percent of the third and fourth grade targeted students will score above a one out of six, as measured by teacher grading using a

rubric designed after the state's holistic scoring system (Appendix G, p. 71).

To challenge staff and students it was hoped that after participation in a 12-week program, at least 10 percent of the targeted students would score a five or a six, as measured by teacher grading using a rubric designed after the state's holistic scoring system.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Many teachers use the process writing form to teach writing. Teachers are allowing children to improve their work and realize that there is always room for improvement. Although teachers are focusing more on writing and less on grammar there still needs to be improvement. Children need to see the connection of writing to all areas, not just to language arts. Using process writing during language blocks and demand writing during content time, integration of the writing curriculum would encompass all areas that must be covered.

Ridout, Riehl, and deGraff (1990) piloted a project based on the idea that all aspects of language arts should be integrated throughout the curriculum. They used an unspecified number of Indiana University Southeast (I.U.S.) juniors and

seniors, working with two or three, fourth or fifth grade students. The researchers determined competencies that the college students should demonstrate and then developed ways for the I.U.S. students to present their knowledge. Each group remained together for six sessions with each session lasting one to two hours. The I.U.S. students used two basal stories as a starting point for integration. A modified directed reading activity was used as the basis for the unit. This activity prepared the reader with a base idea and then allowed for expansion and enrichment with purposeful activities all related to the story. Process writing was used in relation to the stories. The writing topics had to relate to the theme and covered such ideas as poetry, journal writing, and authors. The results of the questionnaire given to the students, I.U.S. students, and classroom teachers were positive. The educational experience was perceived as being excellent. The conclusion of this study was that purposeful integration does improve writing skills.

Research done by Davis, Rooze, and Runnels (1992), indicated that writing assists learning, because the writer is producing a personal product, not just regurgitating information. The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of journal writing on elementary social studies. The subjects consisted of 77 fourth grade students in four classrooms from two middle class section elementary schools in Texas. To determine the equivalence of the groups, scores from the social science section of the Stanford Achievement Test were used. In addition, the spontaneous writing portion of the Test of Written Language-2 was administered to assess writing ability. The groups were determined to be equivalent. Students in the experimental group received journal writing instruction. The control group and the experimental group covered the same social studies content. The control group received no journal training. The teachers in the experimental group set aside 10 minutes of journal writing a day for nine weeks. Students in the research participated voluntarily. No

grades were given for the journal writing, and students all used the journals in varying ways. Some students wrote what they learned, others made it narrative, others used it like a diary. Findings from the study indicated that journal writing was not significantly more effective in promoting initial social studies achievement, but it did significantly increase students' writing fluency. Journal writing benefitted both higher and lower ability writers, and facilitated learning retention of fourth grade social studies. The study led to the conclusion that writing should be incorporated into elementary social studies, since the results indicated that journal writing increased fluency and retention.

Lipa and Harlin (1993) studied teachers' beliefs and practices as related to writing and process writing. A sample of 66 teachers in grades kindergarten through seven teaching in urban, suburban, and rural schools in New York was used. A 19 item interview schedule developed by the writers was administered by a trained group of graduate students. Three

categories were used to analyze the responses: A) teachers' beliefs and understanding; B) instructional decisions for writing; and C) training and support for teaching process writing. In category A, 94 percent of the teachers understood that writing was a communication act. In category B, 40 percent of the teachers thought managing process writing was the hardest, while 55 percent said instruction was the hardest. Category C revealed that 92 percent of the teachers had received some form of training in process writing. In conclusion, teachers' beliefs and understandings reflected what they teach in their classrooms.

Boidy and Moran (1994) researched improving students' ability to transfer learning among subject areas, and apply what is learned to everyday occurrences. The subjects consisted of third and fifth grade students at a suburban, middle class elementary school in Illinois. A needs assessment was done through teacher and student surveys. An interview was also conducted with a curriculum director. The two

researchers developed an integrated curriculum using state and district mandated curriculum. This curriculum was implemented in the fall and an alternative assessment program was implemented the following January. The curriculum integrated technology and core disciplines, along with a real life setting. The purpose for the change in assessment was to vary the assessment of student performance and to apply creative means of demonstrating the curriculum connections. Through teacher and student surveys and alternative assessment, the researchers found that through the integrated curriculum the students were better able to transfer knowledge and apply skills learned in school to everyday life. In conclusion, integrated curriculum can provide a transitional bridge for those students that are unable to connect academics with real life experiences.

Bristor (1994) conducted a five-year research project with Romance and Vitale. The researchers recognized the need for more efficient writing, improved comprehension, and

increased content knowledge. The research project studied the effects of an integrated curriculum on the achievement, attitudes, and self confidence of fourth and fifth grade students. Selected subjects abilities ranged from at-risk to above-average. An unspecified number of students and schools were used. The targeted students received in depth instruction in science and reading. The opportunities included hands-on science, writing, and discussions. Some of the writing activities included learning logs for science, paraphrasing and summarizing concepts learned in science, applying science to real life, and using group experience stories to promote the language and science connection. The results for the first four years of the study showed a significant increase of the targeted students scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test-Science subtest and the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills-Reading subtest. Data from the fifth year is currently being analyzed. The conclusion of the report encourages the development of writing through integrated curriculum.

In a study done by Roth, Peasley, and Hazelwood (1992) the authors felt as if they learned more about integration through learning from the students. Using observations and interviews the researchers examined ways that the students integrated their knowledge. Two specific case studies were done on two fifth grade students to give a more detailed description of how the students integrated their knowledge. Included in the study were two fifth grade teachers, one third grade teacher, two university professors, and three doctoral students in teacher education. The results of the study showed that three factors contributed to how a student makes connections across the curriculum: features of the learning community in each subject matter, philosophy of the teacher in each subject matter, and students' personal lives and experiences as related to the subject. In conclusion, the study pointed out that not only does integrated learning provide a core for children's learning, but when the teachers and students learn together a learning community is formed.

As the previous research stated, when a school begins to integrate the teachers must also be taught the proper skills. Shanahan, Robinson, and Schneider (1993) stated that every part of the curriculum required communication. It is unnatural to separate the curriculum and interaction. When the students are required to read and write about science they begin to think like scientists. Teachers need to be guided as to the relevance of these natural connections.

Besides knowing why they should integrate curriculum teachers need to know how to integrate curriculum. Steiner (1993) described an easy and interesting method to help teach teachers how to integrate geography into literacy. Most importantly, he understood the time constraints that the teachers are under in the classroom. In his inservice he did a five step process with the teachers. They began the process by brainstorming geographically related vocabulary that may be necessary to cover in the elementary curriculum. Each teacher then chose a particular concept. First, they had to find as many

visual representations of the concept as they could. Second, they had to describe the feature using the writing process. Third, they had to describe the feature in terms that an elementary student would understand. Fourth, they had to construct a three dimensional model of the feature. Lastly, they had to display the finished product along with an expository writing sample to share with their elementary students. This activity provided two positive outcomes. One was that the teachers walked away with an excellent idea to use with their class along with a working example; and secondly, they were able to feel some of the frustration the kids feel when they must research a topic.

Another method of teacher training is by example. Bush (1994) and some of her colleagues that taught the core communications curriculum to perspective teachers tried this method. Bush felt that universities often preach an integrated curriculum to new teachers, but then never practice what they teach. With all the divergent trains of thought in education

Bush found that the integrated curriculum was a common thread. At the time of the published article the results were still being studied. They felt improvements did need to be made, but all of the university faculty members involved said they would continue the program. At the close of the article it was stated that a collaboration with the science, math, and social studies methods courses was still being investigated. Teaching beginning teachers this way allowed them to see a practical application of curriculum integration.

Courtland (1992) discussed the difficulty of changing a teacher's teaching style after it has already been established. With each teacher being unique, the trainer must keep in mind that the change that is being implemented must follow some guidelines. Courtland discovered that there was no definite rules, but she did give the trainer goals that he or she should follow. First and foremost, in order for the training to work, the teacher must feel empowered. Empowerment included the trainer's delivery of instruction and management of the

innovation. Management of the innovation included on-going support of the program, a planning committee, and collaborative effort. Delivery of instruction included small group meetings, and focus on one innovation, rather than many.

Rosaen (1990) developed a theory that teachers need to replace unproductive writing assignments with ones that encourage the writer to think. According to Rosaen this included writing across the subjects. Rosaen stated that writing plays a crucial part in the development of abstract and higher level thinking and in helping students apply these skills to understand subject matter. Writing should be used for a particular purpose and not just to write letters or stories. Rosaen identified five steps to achieve these goals in the classroom. The first step was to identify the thought processes of the student. The teacher could then use the text as a thinking tool for writing. The teacher also must decide what type of written form the writer should use to make it the most productive learning experience. Teachers should also

teach students how to develop and use mental plans. Finally, the teacher needs to meet the students' learning needs. In summary the researcher believed that writing needs to be more qualitative through integration into other subject matters. This makes the writing practical and useful to the student.

Along with the strategies to train teachers, there are many ideas that have been used and have worked in the classroom. Suggested methods according to Scarnati and Weller (1992) focused mainly on science and language integration. The method described was hands-on activities. Students share similar experiences when activities are performed in class. The teacher can then introduce a writing assignment without having to worry about background and experience. The writing activity can be any of the four styles. For narrative writing the students told about the experience from beginning to end. For descriptive writing the students described particular physical properties that required detailed

observation. In explanatory writing the students described the how and why so the reader could duplicate the process. The final type of writing, persuasive, was used to convince the reader to believe logically supported findings. All of Scarnati and Weller's assignments showed the natural connection between language arts and science.

Scarnati (1994) wrote another article that detailed the integration of science and language arts. In this article he detailed a science experience using an earthworm. He related that the students showed great enthusiasm, because of the techniques he used to integrate language arts and science. He began the lesson with a discussion of what was in the shoebox he had. Once the earthworm was identified, each student received a worm and named their worm. They continued with another communication activity, by introducing their worm to the class. They began observing and discussing their observations. A reading assignment on earthworms was given as homework. The next day the class reviewed their reading

and split into two groups, for a writing activity. The activity involved interviewing an earthworm. One partner worked on his or her oral communication skills, and the other partner worked on his or her writing skills. The author provided an interdisciplinary lesson that stimulated the students while allowing them to apply their knowledge.

Another method to integrate science and language was noted by Srulowitz (1992). Due to her interest in nature, she had the children do a diary of a tree. Using this diary the children watched the growth of the tree unfold. They began by writing simple observations about a tree and ended by writing a detailed report about the tree they observed. They observed the trees once a week from March until May and recorded each observation in their diaries. This project integrated language and science in a natural setting and environment.

Language arts may be integrated with other subjects besides science. Nevin (1992) gave an example of integrating language arts with math. Nevin stated that mathematics is not

just computation, it is thinking, communication, and solving problems. In her article Nevin told a story to help understand base 10. After the story was read, the class discussed it, dramatized it, and used writing to make further predictions. Included in her article were patterns, additional activities, reinforcement, and enrichment activities. Nevin based all of the activities on the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards and used language arts to achieve each standard. Nevin also showed that there is a variety of language activities that can be incorporated into mathematics while still following curriculum guides and manuals.

Solution Strategy

The research cited above suggests that if training is available and relevance is observed, then teachers will use process writing and integrate demand writing into content areas other than language. The research of Lipa and Harlin (1993) implied that teachers are willing to teach the writing as long as they are trained. Davis, Rooze, and Runnells (1992)

stated that demand writing in a content area increases writing fluency and learning retention in the content area. Ridout, Riehl, and deGraff (1990) demonstrated that integrated writing can increase critical thinking skills and enhance writing. The author concluded from the work of Lipa and Harlin (1993), Davis, Rooze, and Runnells (1992), and Ridout, Riehl, and deGraff (1990) that training for teachers in the integrating of writing would increase students' critical thinking skills and retention of content areas.

Research done by Boidy and Moran (1994), Bristor (1994), and Shanahan, Robinson, and Schneider (1993) suggested that integration is needed to make learning relevant to the students. Boidy and Moran (1994) found that an integrated curriculum allowed students to transfer knowledge and apply learned skills to everyday life. Bristor (1994), although still conducting the study, found that in the first four years of integration of curriculum standardized test scores did increase significantly. Shanahan, Robinson, and Schneider

(1993) found that when integrating, children see the natural connections and begin to integrate within their own minds, which in turn increased comprehension. Through the work of Boidy and Moran (1994), Bristor (1994), and Shanahan, Robinson, and Schneider (1993) the author concluded that integration of curriculum is effective.

Steiner (1993) and Courtland (1992) felt that some important factors must be considered in the training of teachers. Steiner (1993) used visuals, group work, and collaboration in his training of the teachers. He felt this reinforced the training and made it meaningful. Courtland (1992) noted that teachers must feel empowered when a new concept is introduced. Both researchers felt that the teachers must feel comfortable about their training for it to work.

Scarnati (1994) and Srulowitz (1992) introduced ideas that had worked in their classrooms. Each of these teachers integrated science and language arts together. Scarnati (1994) kept his middle school class involved in earthworms by having

the students develop a personality for the worm and then interviewing each other's worms. Srulowitz (1992) integrated science and language by using a three month diary to record the changing of a tree. Both researchers allowed integration to be fun, relevant, and educational.

The author used the work of Ridout, Riehl, and deGraff (1990), Davis, Rooze, and Runnels (1992), and Lipa and Harlin (1993) to support the theory of training teachers in integration of curriculum at the targeted school site. In the training the author used research supported by Boidy and Moran (1994), Bristor (1994), and Shanahan, Robinson, and Schneider (1993) to explain to the teachers why integration of curriculum is relevant. The author kept in mind the hints that Steiner (1993) and Courtland (1992) gave to help ensure a steady transition into the concept of integration into the classroom. In the training the author provided ideas as given by Scarnati (1994) and Srulowitz (1992). The author of this proposal used these references as a basis for implementation.

CHAPTER III

Method

The implementation of this proposal was the responsibility of the author. All aspects of organization of this proposal were also the responsibility of the author. In order for implementation to take place, the author relied on the cooperation of the faculty, students, and administration. Any and all participation by faculty, students, and administration was voluntary.

Approximately 10 weeks prior to implementation, the author sought approval from the site administrator to implement the proposed plan. After approval the author also asked for compensatory time for volunteering teachers. Once this was approved, the author was able to seek volunteers for the project. All third and fourth grade teachers agreed to participate.

Prior to implementing the formal program, the author, as state writing site contact person, had each teacher sign a letter authorizing that they were volunteers and would allow the author to survey, inservice, and observe in their classrooms (Appendix H, p. 74). The form also included a statement that told the teachers that results of the research will be referenced in the practicum document. The author then surveyed the teachers as a needs assessment for inservice training. The needs assessment determined the content of the inservice training. The author then planned the inservice training and teacher training days.

The author requested permission to begin implementation of the proposal from the district school board office. Also, as part of pre-implementation, permission slips were sent home with fifth grade students that took the state writing exam during the 1994-1995 school year (Appendix I, p. 76). This permission slip included a brief explanation of what type of research was being conducted, and asked for the parents' and

students' permission to survey the students and reference the results in the practicum document. The author also explained that no names would be used.

On the same day, different permission slips went home with the third and fourth grade students who were voluntarily participating (Appendix J, p. 78). This permission slip asked for the parents' and students' permission to allow the student to participate in a pre-training writing sample followed by a post-training writing sample. This permission slip also included a brief explanation of the research and stated that results would be printed in the research document with no names being used.

After five days, it was assumed that the majority of the fifth grade permission slips had been returned. The author surveyed the students that returned their permission slips. Results were analyzed after all surveys were complete. The author shared the results of this survey to the teachers during the first inservice.

Again, after five days, it was assumed that all third and fourth grade permission slips were collected. The author passed out the pre-training writing prompts to each teacher. Each teacher received a class set of two different prompts with half of the prompts being the same expository prompt and the other half being the same narrative prompt. (The state writing assessment also divides the prompts in this manner.) The author had each volunteer teacher administer the pre-training writing prompts to the children in their classroom. Only those who returned their permission slips were included in the results. This allowed for the student to be in their normal classroom setting. (The state writing exam is also administered in this way.)

The author enlisted the help of one of the volunteer teachers to help the author score the pre-training writing samples, based on the author created rubric. The volunteer teacher teaches a group of drop out prevention fourth and fifth grade students. The volunteer was also trained in the scoring

of the state writing exam and has also helped and observed writing teachers at the targeted school site. The author and the volunteer teacher rated the samples separately. Just as with the state writing exam, the two scores were averaged together to receive the final rating for each sample. After scoring of the pre-training samples, implementation began.

In order to implement this project, the author needed few resources and materials. Copies of the teacher surveys were needed. Copies were made of the fifth grade student surveys. For each third and fourth grade student a "writing folder" was provided. This folder included directions on the front, the prompt on the inside cover, one brain storming page and two lined pages for writing. For teacher training the author needed to make copies of the observation sheets, open ended statement page, and list of writing topics. Overheads of these pages were also made.

During the first week of implementation the author conducted the first training session. The first session

involved an introduction of what integration is. This included explaining to teachers through research findings why integration is important. This session also included a brainstorming activity to generate what else the teachers wanted to know about integration. The author then answered the brainstormed questions.

In the second week of implementation the second training session occurred. In this session the author answered questions from the previous session that had to be researched. The author then proceeded to use an example of how to integrate in the classroom. The author then allowed the teachers to interact in a simulated classroom activity integrating science and writing. The author then listed other grade appropriate activities that the teachers could use in their classrooms. The session wrapped up with another brainstorming activity. In this activity the group brainstormed their own ideas about integration. After the ideas were exhausted, the author and teachers grouped the ideas by

subject. The author then used the list as a resource to type up and gave it to the teachers at the next session.

The third week included the third teacher training session. In this session the author explained how to prepare the children for the state writing exam through integration. The author provided a recommended list of topics to use with the students (Appendix K, p. 82). The author also reviewed the scoring rubric and examples of each type of score.

The fourth week was the last training session prior to classroom observations. This session included a review of material covered. Once all questions had been answered the author set up observation dates and times with each teacher. The author trained the site mentor on what to look for during an observation. This way the author was also observed integrating the curriculum. All volunteering teachers received a copy of the observation sheet during this session. Teachers then left the session knowing when they would be observed and what the observer would be looking for.

Weeks five to 11 included classroom observations and feedback. The author or the mentor went to each classroom six times to observe that integration was occurring. The author created observation checklist was utilized to support these observations. Teachers were expected to be integrating writing into at least one content area during at least five out of six of the scheduled, direct observations. Teachers received a copy of the completed observation checklist after each observation.

During the twelfth week of implementation, the author gave the teachers the second set of prompts. There were two post-training writing prompts that were different topics from the pre-training writing prompts, but the format remained the same. After all post-training writing samples were returned, the author scored each writing sample. The volunteer teacher then scored the papers separately. The author then looked at the two scores and averaged the scores for each sample. The author than compiled a list of the scores for each teacher's

class, so the teachers could compare their scores. Once this was accomplished the author and teachers were ready for the final session.

The final session was an open discussion to share feelings and accomplishments. The author shared the post-training writing samples and results with the teachers. The author also gave the teachers some open ended fill in the blank statements, asking about their feelings about integration. Once this session was over the author evaluated all of the objectives and analyzed the data.

Timeline

Week	Activities
10 weeks prior	Sought approval from site administrator to implement proposal Requested compensatory time for volunteering teachers Recruited volunteers
Three weeks prior	Created surveys, permission slips, rubric, writing prompts, and observation sheet Obtained permission from district office

	Created schedule of training days Outlined training for teachers
Two weeks prior	Sent letters of explanation with permission slip home to parents of participating students Distributed letters of explanation with permission slip to teachers
One week prior	Received permission slips back from teachers and students Scheduled time with teachers to survey teachers and students Surveyed teachers and fifth grade students Conducted pre-training writing sample time in classrooms
One	First training- introduction, explanation of why teachers should integrate, shared teacher surveys, shared fifth grade surveys, shared writing samples, and, brainstorming
Two	Second training - How to integrate, using examples, and practicing, brainstorming additional ideas
Three	Third training - Preparation for state writing assessment, list of topics, and implementation in classroom
Four	Fourth training - Reviewed and scheduled observations

Five to 11	Observations and feedback in individual classrooms
12	Final training - Feelings and accomplishments Open-ended written statement of feelings
13	Evaluated objectives Analyzed data of results

CHAPTER IV

Results

The results of this project were positive. One hundred percent of the targeted teachers did express the benefits of an integrated writing curriculum when measured by a review of responses to an open-ended invitation to write about the positive effects of an integrated curriculum. Teachers' comments ranged from short and emphatic to detailed and positive.

Teachers were first asked to describe in their own words how they would describe integration through the content areas. One teacher stated that integration is necessary in order for the students to grasp the concept of writing. Eight teachers used various terms to describe it as being beneficial, effective, important, and easy to implement. The summary of all the statements was a positive reaction to integration.

Second, teachers were asked what they felt were the advantages for the children when integration was used in the classroom. Three teachers felt that it helped students improve their writing skills by allowing them a more realistic setting. Four teachers felt that it allowed the students to understand how different subjects interrelate to each other. The other two teachers felt that it allowed the students to get more accomplished in the shortened time span that they have at school.

Teachers were then asked to state whether they would recommend an integrated curriculum to another teacher. All nine teachers responded that they would encourage other teachers to use integrated curriculum. One teacher felt that the subjects could be more than adequately covered using integration and in most cases could save time. From a different standpoint another teacher felt that it required more work, but felt that she and her students benefited, because there were fewer discipline problems when the

students were so involved. A third teacher said that integration was the only way to cover all the subjects and receive sufficient writing practice.

Finally, the teachers were asked to predict how they feel this group of students will do on the state writing assessment, now that they have been taught through an integrated curriculum. Only one teacher felt that she still was unsure how the students would do, because she feels the test is too unpredictable. The other eight teachers believed that this group of students will surpass previous scores, because of the heavy emphasis on writing. One teacher wrote that through the integrated writing experience in class the students would be able to apply their skills to any topic just as they applied their writing skills to any subject area through the integrated curriculum approach.

All eight teachers were willing to participate in weekly observations by the author. The author, being the ninth teacher, was observed weekly by the assistant principal, who was also

her mentor. The teachers were well prepared for the observations and few had to be rescheduled. In order to keep the observations running smoothly the author inserted a reminder note in each teacher's mailbox on the Monday of the week they were to be observed. All nine teachers were observed once a week for six weeks. All nine teachers were found to be integrating their curriculum on all six scheduled observation dates. The author felt that this was a positive effect on the project as a whole.

All nine classrooms were able to increase their scores from the pre-training writing prompts to the post-training writing prompts. The author had anticipated higher scores than were earned, but the author felt that there was vast growth in each class as shown on the pre-training and post-training graphs (Table 1, p.53). In looking at the graphs the author felt that with an additional amount of time and with the use of only the fourth grade scores the students would have been able to reach the stated objectives.

Table 1

Pre-Training and Post-Training Writing Scores

Pre-Training Writing Scores

Scores	3A	3B	3C	3D	4A	4B	4C	4D	4E	Total
	(Number of students for each score by class)									
0	9	20	14	11	11	4	7	4	3	83
.5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
1	9	1	5	3	9	4	9	9	5	54
1.5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
2	2	0	0	0	2	1	7	2	2	16
2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
3	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	6
3.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
4.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	20	22	19	14	24	10	28	16	13	166

Post-Training Writing Scores

Scores	3A	3B	3C	3D	4A	4B	4C	4D	4E	Total
	(Number of students for each score by class)									
0	4	9	5	3	0	2	2	0	1	26
.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	6	8	8	7	5	5	4	8	3	54
1.5	2	1	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	10
2	5	1	1	0	3	1	5	3	1	20
2.5	1	0	0	0	2	1	4	0	0	8
3	1	1	0	0	6	0	5	2	5	20
3.5	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	4
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
4.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
5.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	19	21	16	13	17	10	27	14	11	148

One hundred sixty-six students were evaluated using the writing rubric on the pre-training writing prompt. Of those 166 students, none of them scored above a four. Only eight percent of the students scored a three or above on the pre-training sample. There were 83 scores of zero. The overall average score was .7. Eighty-four percent of the students scored a one or below on the pre-training writing sample with only 16 percent of the students scoring above a one.

A total of 148 students were evaluated using the rubric on the post-training writing prompt. The lower number of students was attributed to absences and relocations. No new students were recruited for the post-training sample, because they had not received all of the instruction that other students had. Of the 148 students evaluated on the post-training sample 20 percent of them scored a three out of six or higher. This was an increase of 12 percent compared to the pre-training sample. The overall average of the post-training writing samples was 1.5 out of a possible six points. This showed an

increase of .8 of a point compared to the pre-training writing sample. The author felt this was a meaningful increase on a six point scale.

The author had anticipated that 100 percent of the third and fourth grade students would be able to score above a one out of six on the post-training writing sample. Although this objective was not met, 65 percent of the students improved from the pre-training to the post-training writing samples. Forty-five percent of the students scored above a one out of six for the post-training sample. This showed an increase of 29 percent compared to the pre-training samples. The author felt that this objective would have been easier to meet over a longer period of time. The author also felt that the students' writing ability prior to the training was incorrectly judged, and the author did not expect that such a great leap was going to have to occur to meet the objective.

As a challenge to the staff and students the author had expected at least 10 percent of the targeted students to score

a five or six on the post training sample. Zero percent of the students achieved a five or six on the pre-training sample, while two percent of the students were able to do this on the post-training sample. The author stated that this was a difficult objective and was pleased with the two percent increase.

In summary, two out of four objectives were achieved. One hundred percent of the nine targeted teachers were observed teaching an integrated curriculum during six out of six weekly, scheduled, direct observations. One hundred percent of the nine targeted teachers expressed the benefits of an integrated writing curriculum as measured by review of responses to an open-ended invitation to write about the positive effects of an integrated curriculum. However, within the design of this project, two out of the four objectives were not achieved. In this author's opinion 100 percent of the third and fourth grade students would not be able to score above a one and it was too high of a criterion, because some students

with specific learning disabilities were unable to read and write. In the author's opinion, a longer implementation time would allow at least 10 percent of the targeted students to score a five or six, as measured by teacher grading using a rubric designed after the state's holistic scoring system. The author felt that the project enabled the students to be better prepared for the state's writing exam by relieving stress about the format of the exam and in general made the students more aware of their writing ability and how to improve it.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

Teachers who are integrating the writing curriculum as needed will produce more critical thinkers and enhance the students' writing skills. The success of the project should lead to other teachers wanting to learn about how to integrate writing throughout the curriculum. The author would like to continue the training sessions at the beginning of each year. The new groups of teachers could include beginning teachers who need support and veteran teachers who would like to implement a new project in their classrooms.

A continuation of the program would lead to better writers and critical thinkers. With more teachers implementing the program, the program would become more uniform and allow for more writing opportunities. If there are

more writing opportunities, then the students will become more attuned, aware, and comfortable with writing through curriculum integration.

It was difficult as a classroom teacher to maintain a full weekly schedule of observations to accommodate everyone. The author felt it necessary to rely heavily on peer teachers. This project could not have been done without the support of the neighboring teacher. Arrangements had to be made with that teacher to watch the author's class. It was difficult to time how long an observation would last and some days were more tightly scheduled than others. It is extremely important that the author had such a cooperative team, faculty, and class to work with.

Many positives were apparent throughout the project and will continue to appear as teachers continue to teach using an integrated curriculum. As the author stated before, more time is necessary to fully evaluate the progress of students' gains in their writing ability. In order to sustain the continued

success, the author will continue to enhance the teachers' curriculum by giving them weekly ideas and writing prompts to use with the children. The school site will receive results in May on the state writing exam that was administered in January. The author anticipates increased scores from the previous years.

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Appendices

Appendix A

1995 School Site and District Writing Scores

Appendix A

1995 School Site and District Writing Scores

1995 Targeted Site Writing Assessment Results

Score	Writing to Explain		Writing to Tell a Story	
	Number of students	Percent of students	Number of students	Percent of students
6	0	0	0	0
5.5	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0
4.5	1	2	0	0
4	1	2	2	5
3.5	0	0	7	17
3	9	22	15	37
2.5	8	20	11	27
2	12	29	4	10
1.5	3	7	0	0
1	6	15	0	0
Not related	1	2	0	0
No response	0	0	0	0
Average Score		2.2		2.8
Average Score Combined			2.5	

1995 District Writing Assessment Averages (Grade 4)

Type of Prompt		
Expository	Narrative	Combined
2.1	2.7	2.4

Appendix B

Survey of Previously State Tested Students

Appendix B

Survey of Previously State Tested Students

Circle one answer for each item below.

1. Do you remember taking the state writing exam last year?

Yes No

2. Do you feel you were prepared for the exam?

Yes No

3. Do you feel you did the best that you could do?

Yes No

4. Is there anything that teachers can do to better prepare students to take this exam?

Yes No

If yes, explain what teachers could do._____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C

Teacher Survey

Appendix C

Teacher Survey

1. Give an example of how you teach writing.

_____
_____
_____

2. Check the one sentence that applies best to your classroom.

_____ I integrate writing into at least one subject area on a daily basis.
_____ I integrate writing into at least one subject area on a weekly basis.
_____ I integrate writing into at least one subject area on a monthly basis.
_____ I teach writing in a separate time block.

3. Rate your experience in teaching:

	novice	minimum experience	maximum experience	expert
expository writing	1	2	3	4
integrated curriculum	1	2	3	4
narrative writing	1	2	3	4
process writing	1	2	3	4
demand writing	1	2	3	4

4. What specific training have you had in teaching writing?

_____
_____
_____

5. What college courses did you take specifically related to teaching writing?

---

6. How fairly do you feel the state writing exam reflects student ability?

---

7. If inservice were provided, what areas would you like to see covered?

___ integrated writing curriculum
___ expository writing
___ narrative writing
___ demand writing
___ process writing
___ journal writing
___ response logs
___ other

_____

Appendix D

Writing Prompts

Appendix D

Writing Prompts

Pre-training expository prompt:

Everyone has jobs or chores.

Before you begin writing, think about one of your jobs or chores.

Now explain to the reader of your paper why you do your jobs or chores.

Pre-training narrative prompt:

Everyone has done something he or she will always remember.

Before you begin writing, think about something you have done that you will always remember.

Now tell the story about what you did that you will always remember.

Post-training expository prompt:

Every city has good points and bad points.

Before you begin writing, think about "a perfect city."

Now describe to the reader how your "perfect city" would look and why it would look that way.

Post-training narrative prompt:

Everybody at some time, does something that he or she is not supposed to do.

Before you begin writing, think about a time you did something you were not supposed to do.

Now tell the story about what you did that you were not supposed to do.

Appendix E

Open Ended Statement Review

Appendix E

Open Ended Statement Review

1. Integration of writing through the content area is_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Through an integrated curriculum the children were able to

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. If someone were to ask me if they should integrate curriculum in their classroom I would tell them_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. The state writing assessment is coming up. Due to the integration of the writing curriculum I feel the children will

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix F

Observation Checklist

Appendix F

Observation Checklist

Teacher Name:_____

Date:_____ Time:_____

Subjects being taught:_____

Integration of _____ subjects

Type of writing being used: (check all that apply)

___narrative ___journal ___process

___expository ___response log ___other

___demand ___persuasive _____

Type of activity: (check all that apply)

___teacher directed ___paired students

___student centered ___group activity

___individual assignment ___other

_____

Additional notes_____

_____

Appendix G

Writing Rubric

Appendix G

Writing Rubric

6 points — This writing is typical of how an adult would write. The writing is purposeful, focused, and reflects insight. This writing has a sense of completeness, with adherence to the main idea and a logical progression. There are few, if any errors. The sentences are mature and complete.

5 points — This writing shows a mature writer that does everything that he/she was taught in the writing process. The writing focuses on the topic with ample support. The paper generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling. There is precision in word choice.

4 points — The writer develops a strong sequence. The writing is generally related to the topic with adequate support. A logical order is apparent. The word choice is adequate. Most sentences are complete.

3 points — This is average writing for the grade level. The writing demonstrates an awareness of the topic, but contains loosely related material. The vocabulary is adequate. Most sentences are complete. The support may be included but not fully developed.

2 points	The writing relates to the topic but offers little support. The details are inadequate and illogical. Gross errors are found in the sentence structure. The vocabulary is limited with many errors.
1 point	The writing is terrible. Any ideas are fragmented and difficult to comprehend. Frequent and blatant errors are found in vocabulary, sentence structure, mechanics, and usage. Inappropriate vocabulary is used throughout the paper.
Nonscorable Points	The response is off topic and not related to the prompt at all. The student copied only the prompt. The student refused to respond. The paper is illegible. The paper is incomprehensible. (i.e. The paper is written in a foreign language.) The writing folder is blank.

Appendix H

Teacher Volunteer and Permission Letter

Appendix H

Teacher Volunteer and Permission Letter

Dear Teachers,

I will be doing a research project to complete my Master's Degree at Nova Southeastern University. As part of my research I need your help, which will include your time. I will need to survey, inservice, and observe you. The results of these activities will be referenced anonymously in my proposal and final report. If you are willing to give permission for the above educational opportunities, please sign below and return this form to me.

Thanks!

Karyn Hillary (689-1001)

I will volunteer my time to be surveyed and inserviced. I will also allow for the researcher or the mentor to observe in my classroom. I give permission for the results to be printed.

_____(Signature)

Appendix I

Fifth Grade Volunteer and Permission Letter

Appendix I

Fifth Grade Volunteer and Permission Letter

Dear Parents,

I am currently working on my Master's Degree at Nova Southeastern University. If your child participated in the fourth grade state writing exam last year, I would like to survey him or her on their feelings about the test. I will be printing these results anonymously in my paper, with the possibility of publication. If you and your child would be willing to allow me to survey your child and print the results, please sign this paper and return it to me.

Thank you,

Karyn Hillary (744-8234)

I give permission for my child to be surveyed and the results printed. _____ (Parent Signature)

_____ (Student Signature)

Appendix J

Third and Fourth Grade Volunteer and Permission Letter

Appendix J

Third and Fourth Grade Volunteer and Permission Letter

Dear Parents,

I am working on my Master's Degree at Nova Southeastern University. In order to complete my degree I am doing a research project that will involve the third and fourth grade teachers and students. The research project's main goal is to increase writing skills, so that the students can do better on the state writing assessment test.

If given permission, your child's role in the research will be to give me two writing samples. The teachers will be inserviced on how to increase your child's writing skills and then will implement this training into the classroom setting. All curriculum areas will still be covered with an increased focus on writing. The two writing samples that your child will provide will be done at school during the normal school day. One sample will be done prior to the teachers implementing

their training, and one will be done approximately twelve weeks after the teachers have implemented the training.

Children who are not given permission to participate will be permitted to complete curricular requirements, but results will not be reported. This will be done without prejudice. Children who do return permission slips will be used in the research project. The project will be submitted to the district office and to the university. After acceptance there is a possibility that the research may be published. Names and identities will not be printed in the project.

If you are willing to give permission for your child to participate, please complete the form on the attached page, and return it to school as soon as possible. Remember this is strictly voluntary and permission may be withdrawn at any time. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me. I will be sending you a review of the project once it is completed. Thanks for your consideration.

Karyn Hillary (744-8234)

I give permission for my child to be included in the writing research project with no names or identities being used. I understand I can withdraw permission at any time. I also understand that the project will be shared with other academic institutions and has the possibility of being published.

_____ (Parent Signature)

I also agree to the above and would like to participate in the project.

_____ (Student Signature)

Appendix K

List of Topics

Appendix K

List of Topics

Narrative Topics

Sometimes things happen that make us very angry. Think about a time when you were angry. Explain what made you angry and how you felt.

Being lost can be scary. Describe a time when you became lost.

Sometimes things happen that make us sad. Think about a time you were sad. Describe what made you sad and how you felt.

Imagine that you have the winning lottery ticket. Explain how you feel and what happens.

Every once in a while something very exciting can happen to you. Think about an exciting event in your life. Describe this event and explain how you felt.

Occasionally we find ourselves in a dangerous situation. Describe a time when you had a narrow escape from danger.

One day as you were walking home from school you came face to face with an alligator. Describe the alligator and tell what happened.

Imagine that while exploring a cave your light goes out. Tell how you feel and what you do to get out safely.

Expository Writing

Some people always know what they want to be when they grow up. Think about a career you would choose. Describe the career and explain why you chose it.

Years ago no one had computers. Explain what the world would be like if there were no computers today.

If you could invite a famous science related person to your birthday party, then explain who you would invite and why.

Imagine that a volcano has just erupted in the town you live in. You are close enough to watch while still staying safe. Explain what happens during the volcanic eruption.

Schools teach a lot about endangered animals. Explain why it is important to protect these animals.

If you could invite any famous person from our state to our school, then explain who you would invite and why.

Smoking is known to be hazardous to your health. Explain to the reader why they should not smoke.

Rain is a source of water for all of us. Explain some of the reasons why rain is so important.

Some Indians live in different types of homes. Explain about what type of dwelling a particular group of Indians lives in.

Pretend you just discovered Grog the Caveman. He wants to know how to do math. Explain to him what is most important to do in math and how to do it.